

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 251609Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2617

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 10441

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UR, IS

SUBJECT: SOVIET-ISRAELI RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO THE DUTCH AMBASSADOR HERE, THE CURRENT REFURBISHING OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY IN MOSCOW IS WITHOUT POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. WE BELIEVE EVIDENCE ARGUES AGAINST ANY NEAR TERM SOVIET RESUMPTION OF TIES WITH ISRAEL. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING A CALL BY DUTCH AMBASSADOR HUYDECOPER JULY 23, I ASKED HIM ABOUT RUMORS THAT THE SOVIETS ARE REFURBISHING ISRAEL'S EMBASSY HERE IN PREPARATION FOR RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS. HUYDECOPER, WHOSE EMBASSY REPRESENTS ISRAEL'S  
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INTERESTS IN MOSCOW, SAID UPDK IS PRESENTLY CARRYING OUT

REPAIRS ON THE ISRAELI PREMISES, BUT THE REPAIRS HAVE "NO POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE." HE EXPLAINED THAT THE SOVIETS ARE REQUIRED BY CONTRACT TO MAINTAIN THE ISARELI BUILDING. THE CONTRACT PROVIDES THAT EVERY THREE YEARS UPDK MUST CARRY OUT GENERAL REPAIRS (KAPITALINYY REMONT). WHEN HE ARRIVED IN MOSCOW SIX MONTHS AGO, THE ISRAELI PREMISES WERE IN A VERY POOR STATE. HE TOLD UPDK REPAIRS WERE NEEDED, AND ABOUT THREE MONTHS AGO UPDK ASKED THE DUTCH TO REMOVE THE CONTENTS FROM THE BUILDING (FURNITURE, ETC.). THE SOVIETS SUBSEQUENTLY BEGAN REPAIRS ON THE EMBASSY. ASKED WHEN HE THOUGHT THE ISRAELIS MIGHT RETURN, HUYDECOOPER SPECULATED THAT MOSCOW MIGHT RESUME RELATIONS WITH REVIVAL OF THE GENEVA MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE.

3. COMMENT: RUMORS HERE ABOUT SOVIET REPAIRS ON ISRAEL'S EMBASSY HAVE GENERATED THE EXPECTED ROUND OF SPECULATION AMONG DIPLOMATS THAT ISRAELIS WILL SHORTLY REOCCUPY THEIR REFURBISHED QUARTERS. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT AMBASSADOR HUYDECOOPER'S CLAIM THAT THE CURRENT REPAIRS ARE ROUTINE. MOREVOER, WE THINK THAT BOTH THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE PRESENT STATE OF PLAY ON THE JEWISH EMIGRATION-TRADE QUESTON WORK AGAINST ANY NEAR TERM REVERSAL OF THE SOVIETS' POLICY AGAINST TIES WITH ISRAEL.

4. IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONTEXT THE SOVIETS HAVE, OF COURSE, RECENTLY BEEN MORE ACTIVE IN THEIR CONTACTS WITH ISRAELIS. SOVIET POLICY STATEMENTS AND DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY, PARTICULARLY DURING THE KREMLIN'S LAST ROUND OF ME CONSULTATIONS, HAVE ALSO GONE TO CONSIDERABLE LENGTHS TO MAKE MORE EXPLICIT THE USSR'S WILLINGNESS TO TAKE ISRAELI SECURITY INTERESTS INTO ACCOUNT. HOWEVER, IN ALL THIS ACTIVITY THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION OF A WEAKENING IN SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE TACTICAL POLICY OF USING THE DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION OF ISRAEL TO PRESSURE TEL AVIV ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. IN THIS CONTEXT SOVIET OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO DENY THAT CONDITIONS EXIST FOR REESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC TIES, AND THEY CITE BREZHNEV'S STATEMENT THAT NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

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DEPENDS ON "SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS" IN REACHING AN ARAB-ISRAELI SETTLEMENT. THIS CALCULATEDLY IMPRECISE FORMULA, OF COURSE, LEAVES MOSCOW FREE TO DECLARE "SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS" AT ANY MOMENT IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY A QUICK REVERSAL OF ITS POLICY. HOWEVER, THERE SEEMS TO BE NOTHING ON THE IMMEDIATE HORIZON IN THE WAY OF ME DEVELOPMENTS WHICH THE KREMLIN COULD USE CREDIBLY TO JUSTIFY RESUMPTION OF RELATONS TO ITS ARAB CLIENTS.

MOREOVER, AT A TIME WHEN THE ARABS ARE MOUNTING A CAMPAIGN TO SUSPEND ISRAEL FROM THE UNITED NATIONS, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE SOVIETS WILL COURT ARAB WRATH BY CHOOSING THIS TIME TO REVISE THEIR POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR THE DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION OF ISRAEL.

5. THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY ON THE EMIGRATION-TRADE CONTROVERSY ALSO SEEMS TO ARGUE AGAINST ANY EARLY MOVE BY MOSCOW TO REESTABLISH ITS ISRAELI TIES. THE KREMLIN'S RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH TEL AVIV AND REOPENING OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY HERE--WHENEVER IT TAKES PLACE--IS CERTAIN TO BE TAKEN BY SOVIET JEWS AS SIGNALLING A CHANGE IN EMIGRATION POLICY. THIS WILL PRODUCE A RAPID RISE IN JEWISH APPLICATIONS TO LEAVE AS THE BACKLOG OF POTENTIAL APPLICANTS, WHO HAVE HELD OFF APPLYING IN THE CURRENT HOSTILE CLIMATE, MOVE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A NEW SITUATION. THEREFORE, UNLESS THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IS READY TO COMPROMISE ON EMIGRATION (I.E., TO RAISE THE NUMBER OF EXITS SIGNIFICANTLY), IT IS IMPROBABLE THAT THEY WILL WANT TO COMPLICATE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. ON THE TRADE QUESTION BY TAKING AN ACTION--I.E., RESUMING RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL--WHICH WILL CREATE A SIGNIFICANT JUMP IN THE RATE OF EXIT APPLICATIONS.

6. WHILE THE EVIDENCE THUS STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT MOSCOW WILL NOT MOVE IN THE NEAR TERM TO REVISE ITS POLICY ON RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, THE ONE SIGNIFICANT UNKNOWN REMAINS HOW THE SOVIETS WOULD RESPOND IF ISRAEL WERE TO MAKE RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS A CONDITION FOR GOING TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. IN THIS EVENT, THE KREMLIN WOULD FACE A DIFFICULT CHOICE BETWEEN ITS INTERESTS IN GETTING TO THE MEPC AND ITS RELUCTANCE TO MAKE A BASIC DECISION ON AN APPROACH TO THE EMIGRATION-TRADE PROBLEM BEFORE U.S. INTENTIONS

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ARE CLEAR. IDEALLY MOSCOW PROBABLY HOPES THIS DECISION CAN BE AVOIDED OR AT LEAST DELAYED UNTIL SOME RESOLUTION OF THE MFN-EMIGRATION CONTROVERSY. THEREFORE, GIVEN THE LIKELIHOOD THAT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THE TRADE ACT WILL NOT TAKE PLACE SOON, MOSCOW ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD LIKE TO DELAY THE RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. THESE FACTORS MAY ALSO CONCEIVABLY PLAY A ROLE IN TEMPERING THE SOVIETS ENTHUSIASM FOR AN "EARLY" RESUMPTION OF THE MEPC.

7. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING DEPARTMENT'S AND TEL AVIV'S ASSESSMENT OF THE LIKELIHOOD THAT ISRAEL MAY INSIST ON RESTORATION OF SOVIET RELATIONS AS A CONDITION FOR RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

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